

AMENDED CLAIM SET:

1. - 20. (cancelled).

21. (currently amended) A denitrifying material comprising a mixture of a denitrifying composition for microbially removing nitrate nitrogen from water, said composition comprising particles of calcium carbonate dispersed in sulfur by heating and dispersing calcium carbonate particles in melted sulfur and solidifying the dispersion by cooling, wherein a microporous substance is additionally dispersed in the sulfur and wherein the ratio by weight of sulfur to calcium carbonate is 1:0.3 to 1:3, and mineral fibers.

22. (currently amended) The denitrifying material composition of claim 21, ~~comprising~~ wherein the denitrifying composition comprises 10 parts by weight of sulfur, 10-15 parts by weight of calcium carbonate, and 1-3 parts by weight of a microporous substance.

23. (currently amended) The denitrifying material composition of claim 21, wherein ~~said sulfur~~ the sulfur in the denitrifying composition is amorphous sulfur.

24. (currently amended) The denitrifying material composition of claim 21, wherein the shape of ~~said the~~

denitrifying composition is granular, massive, or molded.

25. (currently amended) The denitrifying material ~~composition~~ of claim 21, wherein ~~said microporous substance~~ the microporous substance in the denitrifying composition is carbon derived from rice hull.

26. (currently amended) The denitrifying material ~~composition~~ of claim 21, wherein ~~said microporous substance~~ the microporous substance in the denitrifying composition is kieselguhr.

27. (currently amended) The denitrifying material ~~composition~~ of claim 21, wherein ~~said microporous substance~~ the microporous substance in the denitrifying composition is a cation exchanger.

28. (previously presented) The denitrifying material ~~composition~~ of claim 27, wherein said cation exchanger is selected from the group consisting of natural zeolites, synthetic zeolites, and bentonite.

29. (cancelled).

30. (currently amended) The denitrifying material of claim 21 ~~[[29]]~~, wherein said mineral fibers are rock wool.

31. (currently amended) A method of decreasing the nitrate nitrogen concentration of water which comprises the step of contacting water containing nitrate ions with the ~~composition~~ denitrifying material of claim 21.

32. (currently amended) A method of decreasing nitrate nitrogen concentration of an effluent selected from the group consisting of factory effluent, sewage effluent, and agricultural effluent, which method comprises the steps of placing the ~~composition~~ denitrifying material of claim 21 in a cage or a net to provide a denitrifying assembly and immersing the denitrifying assembly in said effluent.

33. (currently amended) A method of decreasing nitrate nitrogen concentration of an effluent selected from the group consisting of factory effluent, sewage effluent, and agricultural effluent, which method comprises the steps of packing a column with the ~~composition~~ denitrifying material of claim 21 to provide a denitrifying assembly and passing said effluent through said denitrifying assembly.

34. (currently amended) A method of decreasing nitrate nitrogen concentration of an effluent selected from the group consisting of factory effluent, sewage effluent, and agricultural effluent, which method comprises the steps

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of dispersing the ~~composition~~ denitrifying material of claim 21 in a tank and bringing said effluent into contact with said composition in said tank.